

VZCZCXRO3705  
OO RUEHCHI RUEHDT RUEHHM RUEHNH  
DE RUEHGO #0601 1240848  
ZNR UUUUU ZZH  
O 040848Z MAY 06  
FM AMEMBASSY RANGOON  
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 4502  
INFO RUCNASE/ASEAN MEMBER COLLECTIVE  
RUEHBJ/AMEMBASSY BEIJING 0835  
RUEHBY/AMEMBASSY CANBERRA 9611  
RUEHKA/AMEMBASSY DHAKA 4125  
RUEHLO/AMEMBASSY LONDON 1585  
RUEHNE/AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI 3305  
RUEHUL/AMEMBASSY SEOUL 6706  
RUEHTC/AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE 0513  
RUEHKO/AMEMBASSY TOKYO 4320  
RUEHCI/AMCONSUL CALCUTTA 0714  
RUEHCN/AMCONSUL CHENGDU 0715  
RUDKIA/AMCONSUL CHIANG MAI 0360  
RUEATRS/DEPT OF TREASURY WASHDC  
RUEHGV/USMISSION GENEVA 2648  
RHEHNSC/NSC WASHDC  
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHDC  
RUEKJCS/JOINT STAFF WASHDC  
RUCNDT/USMISSION USUN NEW YORK 0293  
RUEHBS/USEU BRUSSELS

UNCLAS RANGOON 000601

SIPDIS

SENSITIVE  
SIPDIS

STATE FOR EAP/MLS, OES; PACOM FOR FPA

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [SENV](#) [ECON](#) [PGOV](#) [BM](#)

SUBJECT: RANGOON EARTH DAY ENCOURAGES CIVIC PARTICIPATION

REF: RANGOON 0362

¶1. (SBU) Earth Day 2006 gave Post a chance to support the efforts of private individuals who, by addressing environmental issues, show citizens how they can take more control over their futures from the repressive ruling regime.

Embassy employees donated funds for mangrove reforestation, a nascent environmental group gave its first public presentation, and the film, "March of the Penguins," brought in SRO crowds to the American Center. End summary.

¶2. (SBU) Environment is one of the few sectors where the GOB allows NGOs to operate effectively and, in some cases, independently. After witnessing the efforts of the Forest Resource Environment Development and Conservation Association (FREDA), the premier environmental NGO in Burma, to reforest the Irrawaddy Delta with mangroves (reftel), embassy staff marked Earth Day by raising funds internally to assist their activities. Charge' presented FREDA General Secretary U Ohn with K.291,800 (over \$200) on Friday, April 28.

¶3. (U) The American Center hosted standing room only crowds at five public showings of the Academy-Award winning environmental documentary, "March of the Penguins." Over 380 viewers filled the seats.

¶4. (SBU) SEE Green, an unofficial organization of individuals, NGOs, academics, scientists, and writers, gave the first in a monthly series of presentations on April 28. Charge opened a talk by Professor U Yu Pa on "Sustainable Development and the Environment" to an audience of over 50 at the American Center. SEE Green hopes to stay just below the regime's radar screen while fulfilling its primary goal to increase awareness and education on environmental issues. The Embassy has offered the group space and advice to promote the dissemination of information, build societal connections, and give more control to Burmese over their environment and their future.

15. (SBU) Comment: We use "non-political" events like Earth Day to meet two MPP goals: building a foundation for democracy by promoting Burmese efforts in sectors where there is space to educate larger audiences and influence community events; and supporting activities help protect Burma's vast, but threatened, environmental diversity. End comment.  
VILLAROSA